

It all adds up to cleaner air

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About

It All Adds Up



In the News

The Best Workplaces for Commuters annual *Race to Excellence* gives Community Partners another way to ignite community interest in congestion and air quality issues.

July, 2006—Some 50 individuals and organizations, including a longstanding *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* Community Partner, will receive special recognition for promoting Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) designations in their communities during the *Race to Excellence* Annual Awards Ceremony, August 29.

The event will take place at the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference in Boston, August 27-30, 2006 where winners will receive gold, silver, and bronze medals

for their efforts to make it easier for workers to leave their cars at home—a key message of *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air!*

Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the *Race to Excellence* is part of the federal government's voluntary Best Workplaces for Commuters program—a joint U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) initiative that gives participating organizations national recognition and technical assistance to help promote sustainable transportation options for their employees.

Since the initiative launched in 2001, EPA and DOT have recognized over 1,500 organizations, representing more than 3 million employees, as BWC's. Together, these employees have saved over 400 million gallons of fuel and more than three million metric tons of carbon dioxide.

The *Race to Excellence* component emerged in 2005 and encompasses a broad range of participants, including transportation management agencies, business districts, transit authorities, and employee transportation coordinators. The *Race* is open to BWC Network Members and transportation coordinators who work for BWC employers.

"The response to this year's *Race to Excellence* challenge has been great," notes Patrice Thornton, manager of the BWC National Network and the 2006 *Race*. "We've received almost 20 percent more applications than last year, and there's a marked improvement in program quality and the activities our partners are putting in place."

The Pima Association of Governments (PAG), an *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* Community Partner since 2002 and gold medal recipient in last year's *Race to Excellence*, conducts an annual Best Workplaces for Commuters "list release," which highlights Tucson-area employers that meet EPA's *National Standard of Excellence* in commuter benefits.

"We're always looking for ways to keep our program fresh and exciting," said Mary Ann Soto, an employer representative for PAG's Travel Reduction Program. Widely distributed to the Tucson media, Soto said the list is a great way to generate publicity for large and small employers that demonstrate environmental leadership and make other contributions in their communities.

"Best Workplaces for Commuters also is a great springboard for generating community-wide interest and support in finding solutions to traffic and air quality issues," she said. "Plus, it helps us strengthen and build new public-private partnerships that are dedicated to making Tucson a better place to live—and perhaps most important of all, lets commuters realize that they can make a difference by choosing to use transit, carpool, bike, telecommute, or walk to work."

PAG also promotes and reports on its progress with BWC at transportation and air quality committee meetings, in communications with employee transportation coordinators, and in past years, they gave BWC employers recognition plaques during their Travel Reduction Awards ceremony.

"The Pima Association of Governments and so many other organizations are doing super work," Thornton commented. "We're thrilled to be a part of their efforts, and excited about recognizing these groups and individuals at ACT's upcoming conference. The Race has turned out to be a fun and meaningful way to show our appreciation."

The *Race to Excellence* awards will repeat in 2007, which means any BWC programs and activities taking place between June 2, 2006 and June 1, 2007 are eligible to enter the 2007 Race!

[Click for more information about the Best Workplaces for Commuters Race to Excellence.](#)

[Click to learn more about the benefits of joining the Best Workplaces Network.](#)

[Click for a preview of the programs and sessions featured at the Association for Commuter Transportation International Conference.](#)



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